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THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN

It is of the first importance as we approach this Report that we should recognize profoundly the need of reform in all parts of our school system. The Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, at the recent convocation of schools and universities, thought it not improper to say, in behalf of his Oxford colleagues and fellow-workers in English secondary schools, that "Education in England needs to be re-ordered and systematized." Some years ago when Mr. Matthew Arnold made the same insistence the schoolmen voted him a carping critic. As recently as 1890 both France and Germany took in hand very far-reaching changes, not in all parts of their educational systems, but in the secondary and gymnasial systems. The Emperor William and his counsellors doubtless have had in mind the memorable words of Frederick William III when he declared after the apparent loss of everything at the battle of Jena, "the State must make good through intellectual power what it has lost in physical strength." "In a word," said Fichte, "a complete revolution of the former systems of education is what I propose as the only means of preserving the German nation in existence; for no man, no God, no event in the range of possibility can otherwise help us." In our great national confidence we may not see occasion for such warm words as the foregoing, yet every thoughtful citizen should see grave defects in the most vital part of our educational systems, and be concerned for so much of our national welfare as is dependent upon a proper education of the people. Now by vital part of the educational system we mean that part which is variously denominated Secondary (as by the French), Gymnasial (as by the Germans), and Preparatory (as by ourselves). This is the segment of educational work which has riveted the attention of the German emperor in recent years, has challenged the profoundest concern of French savants, particularly since 1885, and was the absorbing theme of the Oxford convocation last October.

It is fortunate, for many reasons, that because of the larger community of interests which now knit civilized peoples together, even a financial depression cannot be merely local or national.

International affinities not only make one sensitive to states and conditions apparently far remote, but also enable one to lay helpful tribute upon the common factors and elements of recovery and strength. About the time that the Berlin conference of 1890 (and a year or two after the memorable congresses in Paris) was endeavoring to preclude the further spread of "an academic proletariat" by enriching and "stiffening" the secondary school work, our own National Educational association was taking the steps that have since eventuated in the Report of the Committee of Ten; and almost simultaneously with the final sitting of the first American committee, representing both our schools and colleges, the first National meeting of schools and universities in Great Britain was holding its sessions at Oxford; and it is significant that the foremost questions of debate at Paris, Berlin, Oxford, and New York were the same. These questions group about such words as the differentiation of pupils, the content of a secondary programme, the educational values and correlation of studies, the true order of studies, the time-needs and limits of subjects the training of teachers, and the supervision of schools.

Some such glance afield as this seems desirable, if for no other reason than that American teachers and the American public may extend to this report a good degree of hospitality. The National Commissioner of Education may properly commend the Report as "the most important educational document ever published in this country;" and the verdict of a leading periodical will be the final judgment of our people: "The Report represents the best judgment of a hundred picked educators upon a great variety of subjects, and thus bears an authority beyond that which has ever before attached to an educational document published in this country and dealing with our own educational problems." President Schurman, therefore, cannot be far wrong in his prophecy that the admirable reports of the conferences are destined to become text-books for schools of pedagogy. In all this there is no claim that independent minds cannot see defects in the Committee's Report. What is urged is that the scheme now published under the auspices of the United States Bureau of Education, in its entirety, may be commended as the best working theory thus far proposed for the organization and conduct of our secondary

schools, public and private. Without some working hypothesis or theory no scientific work can ever be done, and as our evolution friends used to say, "Many of the greatest contributions to human knowledge have been made by the use of theories either themselves imperfect or demonstrably false." But for this Report much may be claimed in addition to the merit of being the only comprehensive working theory of secondary education which has thus far been proposed. It represents the best judgment, not alone of the Committee of Ten, but of some ninety educators chosen from all classes of schools and colleges, East, West, and South—venerable eastern universities, modern state endowments, great city high schools, historic academies, vigorous private schools.

In any scheme of educational work regard must be paid to local conditions and to historic antecedents. At the same time every civilized people must have a national system of education that aims at certain common results and uses certain common means, involving compromise and yielding of individual judgments for the common good. There are to-day in our country about 3,000 high schools and 2,000 private schools giving instruction to about 500,000 pupils.* Now these schools must have much in common in a country possessing a greater educational homogeneity than any European state. And it is doubtless true that not thirty of the 3,000 public high schools referred to are giving a training which our older universities accept as a satisfactory preparation for college, and the remaining 2,970 high schools are not giving as good a training as they might to pupils who are not to enter college. The utter chaos into which college entrance requirements have fallen—the revealed idiosyncrasies of the college faculties often ruthlessly enforced upon long-suffering, protesting schoolmasters,—is a railing reflection upon the intelligence, good sense and fair play of the American people. In so simple a matter as the date for holding entrance examinations, a number of the larger eastern colleges arbitrarily cut the school year short from three to four weeks. Hence the very modest recommendation of the Report that "in the interest of secondary schools uniform dates be established for admission examinations of colleges and scientific schools throughout the United States."

* The only published statistics are nearly a decade old.

Every earnest teacher will read this Report in all its parts and not be content with any abstract of it. Men and women engaged in departmental teaching will study assiduously the admirable conference reports as the best account we have of the methods of the successful teachers of America. A member of the Committee of Ten, therefore, renders the only important service in his power when he suggests some of the reasons for his zeal for the Report, and grounds for urging its general adoption by our schools and colleges.

Nothing in this document seems to me more important than the conviction suggested and enforced by the conferences and the Committee of Ten, that the high school period should be begun two years sooner. All the reasonable claims of the conferences, and the several admirable tentative programmes could thus be realized. In the four years of a preparatory and high school course the best things proposed are more or less impracticable. It is surprising that, excepting a radial area of twenty miles from Boston Commons, there has been so little agitation looking to the lengthening of the secondary school period. This period, as is well known, has for half a century been at least six years in France, Germany, and England, and the excellence of educational results abroad may in large measure be attributed to this fact. It is to no purpose to refer to the difference in the American system that is crowned by the college rather than by the university, for Commissioner Harris tells us that only 3 per cent. of our high school pupils enter our colleges. It follows, therefore, that the best possible provision for secondary education, particularly in our high schools, should be made, if we would send into the world with the fullest equipment for citizenship the 97 per cent. of high school pupils who do not enter college. Our high schools as a rule have better buildings, more highly furnished teachers, more immediate supervision, more substantive traditions, and ampler accommodations than the grammar schools.

Members of the committee felt that it was best to let the suggestions and recommendations stand with regard to beginning certain subjects in the grammar schools, but I believe these will be found more or less impracticable, chiefly because the scope of these schools under existing conditions, is broad enough, and the bifurcations necessary to enable certain pupils to begin Latin,

or science, or a modern language in the grammar school are inexpedient in all but a few communities in our country. But the gravest objection, in my mind, to this "dipping down" process is the difficulty in securing properly qualified teachers. On the other hand there are few communities in which a good standard of qualification for high school teachers cannot be maintained, and to these teachers should be entrusted the work of giving the first instruction, of a formal character, in science and foreign languages. If the American child could be transferred to a six years' course in a high school at the age of eleven, we should have a happy solution of the present perplexing problems not only of the grammar school but also of the high school.

In this respect, what is true of the high school, applies with equal force to our fitting schools of various kinds. Many of the great urban day-schools arrange for this longer period for preparatory work, but even these schools are unfavorably affected by the American tradition that four years should suffice for a secondary course of study. In part this accounts for the tardy preparation of American boys for college. The traditional age for beginning Latin is about fifteen and the average for entering college is nineteen. From two to three years are thus lost to the pupil, and other evils quite as deplorable result. It is gratifying to note that within the past fifteen years there has been a surprisingly large increase in the number of endowed boarding schools—schools destined in the very near future to do for American culture and life what the dozen great public schools in England have been doing for the British nation during the past two hundred years. But here, too, the fatal fetish of the four years' course is at work. Only one of these schools projects a six years' course and in this instance the sixth year is for the questionable purpose of fitting boys for the sophomore class. It is enough to make a thoughtful lover of his country weep to look at the unfortunate, educationally belated fellows of Exeter, Andover, and Lawrenceville. The American mother is partly to blame for this state of affairs, for she is naturally loath to part with her boy when he ought to begin his preparatory education at a boarding school, if the home does not afford suitable opportunities. But fundamental to all this is the traditional, American insanity that a secondary course of instruction need not begin till fourteen and a

half or fifteen. President Eliot is a faithful critic when he tells us that we habitually underestimate the capacities of our youth—reminding us most aptly that in Europe a young man must have faced the question of dying for his country at about the time when with us he faces with terror the ordinary college entrance examination. There was a prime truth in the remark of an eminent American to me some time ago, that our country had more twenty-five year old babies than any civilized country in the world. The callowness, the strange absence of sobriety and sense of responsibility so marked in the college “men” of our older universities, must be a phase of this matter.

The committee was mindful of the fact that to secure an earlier beginning of the secondary courses of study would require time and the impulse of the various recommendations of the Report, and, therefore, they addressed themselves at the final meeting chiefly to the work of framing sample programmes for the four-year courses of study as they are. Too much emphasis cannot well be laid upon the fact that the programmes of Table IV, or rather the first two of these programmes (denominated respectively, the Classical and Latin-Scientific), represent the one performance of the Committee of Ten in which every member (save Professor King who was in Europe at the time of the meeting), took an intensely earnest part. This fact has not—so far as I know—had public expression, and yet it seems to me important that it should have the widest publicity. Given only a four years' course, and it follows that the recommendations of the Conferences, unmodified, are impracticable. Though some statements in the Report point otherwise, I believe it is true that the programmes in Table IV, designated “Modern Languages” and “English,” were not contemplated by a majority of the Committee as suitable material for collegiate preparation. The English programme was not prepared in the full Committee meeting; hence the declaration of the Report: “Although the Committee thought it expedient to include among the four programmes, one which included neither Latin nor Greek, and one which included only one foreign language (which might be either ancient or modern), they desired to affirm explicitly their unanimous opinion that, under existing conditions in the United States as to the training of teachers and the provision of necessary means of instruction, the

two programmes called respectively 'Modern Languages' and 'English' must in practice be distinctly inferior to the other two."

The foregoing statements should remove some misapprehensions, and if they be correct, should have precluded the necessity for the Minority Report by President Baker. The two programmes to which the Minority Report, (and, as I understand, President Schurman in the *SCHOOL REVIEW*), takes exception are justified in the views of the committee by the following statements of the full Report : "The secondary schools of the United States, taken as a whole, do not exist for the purpose of preparing boys and girls for colleges. Only an insignificant percentage of the graduates of these schools go to colleges or to scientific schools. Their main function is to prepare for the duties of life that small proportion of all the children in the country—a proportion small in number, but very important to the welfare of the nation—who show themselves able to profit by an education prolonged to the eighteenth year, and whose parents are able to support them while they remain so long at school. There are, to be sure, a few private or endowed secondary schools in the country, which make it their principal object to prepare students for the colleges and universities ; but the number of these schools is relatively small. A secondary school programme intended for national use must, therefore, be made for those children whose education is not to be pursued beyond the secondary school. The preparation of a few pupils for college or scientific school should in the ordinary secondary school be the incidental, and not the principal object."

It seems to me well, therefore, to repeat that seven-tenths of all the time of the three and a half days the Committee sat were spent in forming the two following programmes, and that it was the best judgment of the Committee that both for pupils going to college and for those whose education terminates with the high school, one of the two programmes on the next page is the best possible.

A comparative study of the secondary programmes in France, Germany, and England, challenges the highest commendation of this Latin-Scientific programme. The only notable omissions here are psychology, ethics, economics, and divinity ; these could be added only in case of the extension of a secondary programme to

TABLE IV

Year	CLASSICAL THREE FOREIGN LANGUAGES (one modern)	LATIN-SCIENTIFIC Two FOREIGN LANGUAGES (one modern)
I	Latin..... 5 p.	Latin..... 5 p.
	English..... 4 p.	English..... 4 p.
	Algebra..... 4 p.	Algebra..... 4 p.
	History..... 4 p.	History..... 4 p.
	Physical Geography..... 3 p.	Physical Geography..... 3 p.
	20 p.	20 p.
II	Latin..... 5 p.	Latin..... 5 p.
	English..... 2 p.	English..... 2 p.
	*German (<i>or</i> French) begun..... 4 p.	German (<i>or</i> French begun)..... 4 p.
	Geometry..... 3 p.	Geometry..... 3 p.
	Physics..... 3 p.	Physics..... 3 p.
	20 p.	20 p.
III	Latin..... 4 p.	Latin..... 4 p.
	*Greek..... 5 p.	English..... 3 p.
	English..... 3 p.	German (<i>or</i> French)..... 4 p.
	German (<i>or</i> French)..... 4 p.	Mathematics { Algebra 2 }
	Mathematics { Algebra 2 }..... 4 p.	Astronomy $\frac{1}{2}$ yr. and Meteorology $\frac{1}{2}$ yr..... 3 p.
	20 p.	20 p.
IV	Latin..... 4 p.	Latin..... 4 p.
	Greek..... 5 p.	English { as in classical 2 }..... 4 p.
	English..... 2 p.	additional 2 }..... 3 p.
	German (<i>or</i> French)..... 3 p.	German (<i>or</i> French)..... 3 p.
	Chemistry..... 3 p.	Chemistry..... 3 p.
	20 p.	20 p.

* In any school in which Greek can be better taught than a modern language, or in which local public opinion or the history of the school makes it desirable to teach Greek in an ample way, Greek may be substituted for German or French in the second year of the Classical programme.

six years. The most radical and questionable feature of the Classical programme is found in the postponement of Greek to the third of a four years' course of study, but it is hoped the reasons for the recommendation as summarized by the Chairman may commend themselves to teachers: "In the first place they endeavored to postpone till the third year the grave choice between the Classical course and the Latin-Scientific. They believed that this bifurcation should occur as late as possible, since the choice between these two roads often determines for life the youth's career. Moreover, they believed that it is possible to make this important decision for a boy on good grounds, only when he has had opportunity to exhibit his quality and discover his tastes by making excursions into all the principal fields of knowledge. The youth who has never studied any but his native language cannot know his own capacity for linguistic acquisitions; and the youth who has never made a chemical or physical experiment cannot know whether or not he has a taste for exact science. The wisest teacher, or the most observant parent, can hardly predict with confidence a boy's gift for a subject which he has never touched. In these considerations the Committee found strong reasons for postponing bifurcation, and making the subjects of the first two years as truly representative as possible. Secondly, inasmuch as many boys and girls who begin the secondary school course do not stay in school more than two years, the committee thought it important to select the studies of the first two years in such a way that linguistic, historical, mathematical, and scientific subjects should all be properly represented. Natural history being represented by physical geography, the Committee wished physics to represent the inorganic sciences of precision. The first two years of any one of the four programmes presented above, will, in the judgment of the Committee, be highly profitable by themselves to children who can go no farther."

No single paper can satisfactorily dwell upon all the important phases of school work which this Report brings into prominence. It is only by comparison with any publication abroad that some of us can appreciate the nutritive, exhaustive character of the work of these hundred educators, some of whom gave nearly two years to the task of its preparation. But after all its most important service to the schools, the colleges, and the coun-

try, will be found to consist in its *inspirational* character. As we read its appeal for a more highly trained body of teachers, its appeal for open college doors for the graduates of the people's schools, its practical suggestions of better methods, wiser order and correlation of studies, its bold excision of useless studies and insistence upon sufficient continuity to secure from every subject pursued genuine mental training, may we not confidently expect that the Report of the Committee of Ten is to mark an higher era in American education?

I began with a reference to the recent memorable Oxford convocation—the first meeting ever held in England of schoolmasters and university-professors: it remains to suggest, that after appropriate study and discussion by teachers, societies, and conventions there should be held, at some educational centre, a meeting of representatives of our foremost schools and colleges to consider practical steps looking to some form of acceptance of this Report on the part of the schools and colleges of the country.

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